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SUBJECT: DARFUR - DESPITE OBSTACLES USAID PARTNERS CONTINUE TO
DELIVER ESSENTIAL HUMANITARIAN SERVICES IN DARFUR

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SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Despite significant bureaucratic impediments and security concerns, a recent USAID monitoring and assessment mission to Darfur confirmed that USAID partners are providing critical, quality, life-saving services to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region. USAID-funded health, nutrition, capacity building, infrastructure rehabilitation, and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs continue to serve beneficiaries in Darfur against a backdrop of fluid and dangerous security, ongoing government harassment, and ambiguous and onerous visa, travel, and customs regulations. End summary.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (U) From February 25 to March 5, USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Disaster Operations Specialist (DOS) traveled to El Fasher, Kafod, Korma, and Kutum, in North Darfur; Nyala, South Darfur; and Zalingei and Mornei, West Darfur, to assess current humanitarian conditions and monitor and evaluate ongoing USAID programs. This represented the first visit by USAID/OFDA/DOS staff to Zalingei and Mornei in more than sixteen months due to restricted access as a result of insecurity. USAID staff met with implementing partners, U.N. agencies, members of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), local government officials, and community members.

NORTH DARFUR

¶3. (U) On February 25, USAID staff participated in an inter-agency humanitarian assessment of Kafod, Kobe Athar, Korma, and Kela Hijoon areas, North Darfur, to investigate reports of new displacement and identify humanitarian needs of affected populations. The team found that no new displacement has occurred since June 2006 when fighting between Arab militias displaced the population of Korma. [Note: Earlier militia clashes in 2004 had displaced the majority of

Korma's population of 40,000 to IDP camps in El Fasher, where humanitarian agencies, including USAID partners International Rescue Committee (IRC), Relief International, and CHF are providing assistance to more than 140,000 IDPs.]

14. (U) The divided control of the region to the west of El Fasher between factions of the SLA led by Minni Minawi and Abdul Wahid al-Nur has exacerbated ethnic tensions and heightened insecurity. The inter-agency mission established contact with SLA commanders to facilitate humanitarian access in the region, including access for U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) staff to conduct a scheduled polio immunization campaign in late March 2007. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will follow up with humanitarian actors in the area to address identified health, nutrition, food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene needs based on assessment findings.

15. (U) Insecurity in Kutum, North Darfur, has presented significant challenges to humanitarian agencies operating in the region resulting in the remote operation of humanitarian health programs by USAID partner GOAL. GOAL's four urban and two rural health clinics in the area are maintained by 240 national staff. Two additional rural health clinics have been suspended due to insecurity. Discussions with GOAL staff highlighted program successes characterized by improved local staff reporting, and positive relationships with local hospital staff and community leaders. However, despite GOAL's success, significant concerns regarding the limitations of remote program operations exist, including the diminished number and quality of services provided and the long-term feasibility of such programs.

SOUTH DARFUR

16. (U) USAID partners in Nyala town continue to operate relief activities while humanitarian organizations in rural areas such as Ed Daein locality in southeastern South Darfur have been forced to

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either partially or fully suspend activities due to insecurity. On March 28, USAID staff traveled to As Salam IDP camp outside of Nyala to monitor an emergency food distribution by USAID and U.N. World Food Program partner World Vision to nearly 5,000 new arrivals, predominantly from Buram, South Darfur. USAID staff noted the high quality of USAID partner Action Contre La Faim's health operations, including a therapeutic feeding center in Nyala town and an out-patient therapeutic feeding program in surrounding IDP camps. In meetings with USAID partners operating in Ed Daein locality, USAID staff reviewed the impact of insecurity on programming which has led to a significant reduction in activities, and in some instances the suspension of humanitarian operations.

WEST DARFUR

17. (U) Although Zalingei town remains relatively calm, the surrounding area supports a number of armed groups, creating an environment of instability and insecurity in the region. On March 3, USAID/OFDA/DOS staff traveled to Zalingei for the first time in over sixteen months to monitor USAID-funded health, protection, camp management, and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs. USAID staff consulted with implementing partners OCHA, Mercy Corps, International Medical Corps, and IRC. Zalingei hosts approximately 100,000 IDPs in five camps, including the only camp of displaced Arabs in Darfur. USAID partner Mercy Corps is providing water services to an estimated 125,000 people in the region. USAID staff found that programs are running smoothly and non-governmental organization partners are providing critical services to targeted populations.

18. Despite the withdrawal of expatriate staff, USAID-funded programs in Mornei, West Darfur, continue to support critical health, nutrition, hygiene, water, sanitation, and road rehabilitation programs under the management of competent national

staff. USAID noted the high quality of nutrition and health operations exemplified by the SC/US hospital in Mornei IDP camp that serves an average of 200 patients per day. SC/US is currently the only clinic in the area providing prenatal, postnatal, and obstetric care and consults an estimated 100 pregnant women per day.

HUME